PATIENT INFORMATION SERIES

SIMPLY speaking

Common Eye Diseases

Pterygium

A pterygium (pronounced "te/rig/yoom") is a growth that extends from the white portion of the eye (conjunctiva)crossing over to the black part (the cornea). The ptergium is embedded with blood vessels that give it its pinkish color often times appearing very red when those vessels dilate in response to irritation or dryness.

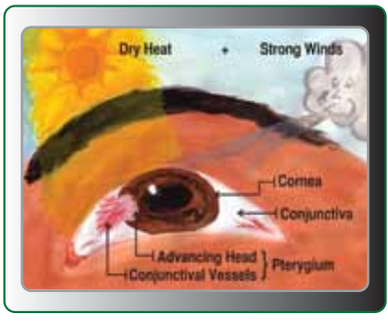
The reasons why a pterygium grows and recurs are thought to include the abnormal growth of the conjunctival cells at the edge of the cornea (the limbus); the damage to those limbal cells by prolonged exposure to ultraviolet rays from sunlight; and, the dryness of the cornea. The corneal surface becomes dry due to the evaporation of tears around the leading head of pterygium. This stimulates growth as the pterygium advances to cover the adjacent dry area.

Pterygium is rare in temperate countries but common in the tropics. We see pterygia more frequently in patients who live in coastal towns, in fishermen and sea men, in farmers, and in motorcyclists. Pterygia typically grow from the nasal or internal border of the cornea but they can also originate from the outer side.

Ordinarily, a small pterygium does not affect vision but patients may be troubled by the redness. A large pterygium can become unsightly and it can cause astigmatism and blurred vision. Rarely, a pterygium may reach the pupil causing permanent visual difficulty.

Conservative treatment for a small pterygium includes reducing exposure to heat and sunlight by using sunglasses outdoors and alleviating dryness with tear supplement drops.

Another treatment option is surgical excision which simply involves scrapping off the head from the corneal surface and cutting it. Recurrence rates are unfortunately high and other more complex surgical techniques are employed to lessen its regrowth. Avoiding extremely dry heat and wind and the use of tear supplements should diminish the chances of recurrence as well.



Consultation Hours: 8:00am - 6:00pm, Monday - Saturday
G/F Belson House, 271 EDSA (near Connecticut St.), Mandaluyong City
Call for an appointment: Tel: 7217135 / 7216412
For more information about our facilities: http://www.galileoeyecenter.com

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galileo SURGICENTER
Cataract & Glaucoma Center

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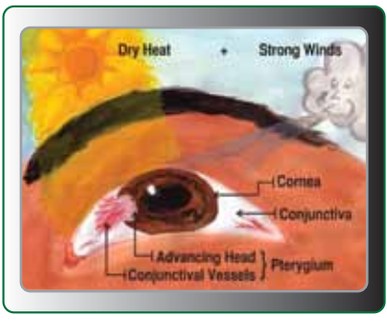

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